

Introduction

When I went through my stem cell transplant, there was a timeline set for the whole process. It included my four cycles of chemotherapy leading up to the transplant. There was a date set for putting in my central line, and then several days for harvesting my stem cells, and then a date for the high-dose of melphalan, a chemotherapy given two days prior to the stem cell transplant. There were also post-transplant target dates. The ten-day mile-marker is very important, as that is a time when the harvested stem cells are supposed to start producing blood cells. At thirty days there is another mile-marker. If the blood counts have significantly risen, they begin the process of releasing me from the transplant center. My counts were in line, and so my central line was removed, and I was released to go home. At three months, there was another mile-marker. I had to have a bone marrow biopsy to see if there were any cancer cells in my bone marrow. There was another mile marker at six months and another at one year. They performed bone marrow biopsies and other tests at each of those mile markers. In my case there were no cancer cells detected. There were additional mile markers for being vaccinated. In a bone marrow or stem cell transplant, your immune system is reset to zero, like a new-born baby. All the previous immunizations have to be re-given. They have many different mile markers for the different vaccinations.

There was a timeline for Jesus' ministry here on earth. In Galatians, Paul wrote, "But when the fullness of time came God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law." There was not just a time for Jesus to come, there was a time for Him to die and depart His earthly ministry. In Acts 2, Peter preached that Jesus was delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. There was a starting point and an ending point on Jesus' timeline. Jesus is at the Feast of Booths, and it is not yet His time to depart earth.

(Ga 4:4) "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,"

(Ac 2:23) "this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death."

Jesus began His ministry at the age of thirty, at a specified time. His public ministry lasted just over three years, and it began with His baptism by John the Baptist, where John testified that Jesus was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world, and that He was the Messiah. The Father also testified that He was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased.

(Jn 1:29) "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

(Mt 3:17) "and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

At the transfiguration, Moses and Elijah met with Jesus, and they discussed His departure, which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Since He was the Passover Lamb, He was going to be sacrificed at the Feast of Passover, not the Feast of Booths, which is the feast being celebrated. These were all points on His timeline, and Jesus knew these milestone markers well. Throughout John 7, we see that His time was not yet here, and that His hour had not come yet. Nothing happened outside of the timeline that the Father and Him had put together.

(Lk 9:30–31) “And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, {31} who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

In Part 1 we saw that Jesus was not ministering in Judea because it was not yet His time and the Jews were seeking to kill Him. Then, He did not go up to the feast with His brothers because His time was not yet here. All Jewish men were required to go to the three feasts, so Jesus went, but He went in secret, not publicly. At the feast people were looking for Him, but could not find Him. He kept a low profile until the midst of the feast. In our passage today, we will look at two more points on His timeline which were evidences that His time was not yet here. We will look at the evidence in the midst of the feast, and on the last day of the feast.

My Time Is Not Yet Here – Part 3

1. Evidenced in the Midst of the Feast (Jn 7:25-36)
2. Evidenced on the Last Day of the Feast (Jn 7:37-53)

(Jn 7:25–53) “So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill? {26} “Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they? {27} “However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.” {28} Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, “You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. {29} “I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me.” {30} So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. {31} But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, “When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He? {32} The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. {33} Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. {34} “You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.” {35} The Jews then said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? {36} “What is this statement that He said, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come’?” {37} Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. {38} “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” {39} But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified. {40} *Some of* the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet.” {41} Others were saying, “This is the Christ.” Still others were saying, “Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? {42} “Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” {43} So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. {44} Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him. {45} The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, “Why did you not bring Him?” {46} The officers answered, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.” {47} The Pharisees then answered them, “You have not also been led astray, have you? {48} “No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? {49} “But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed.” {50} Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them, {51} “Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?” {52} They answered him, “You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.” {53} Everyone went to his home.”

1. Evidenced in the Midst of the Feast (Jn 7:14-36)

In the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach. He had secretly gone to the feast and had remained out of sight until now. As He taught, the Jews were amazed or astonished. They wondered how He could know so much, and had not been through the formal education for a scribe or Pharisee. Some of the people said that He was leading people astray. So, Jesus gave them three keys to discerning if a teaching was from God. He told them about the source of teaching. His source was not the scribes and Pharisees, but from God. He told them that if anyone was willing to do the will of God, he would know whether it was from God. Then He told them that He only sought the glory of the One who sent Him, and He did not seek His own glory.

(Jn 7:14-18) “But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and *began to teach*. {15} The Jews then were astonished, saying, “How has this man become learned, having never been educated?” {16} So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. {17} “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself. {18} “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

Then Jesus told them that none of them carries out the Law. He asked them why they were seeking to kill Him. Many of the people were unaware that the religious leaders had determined to kill Him. The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?” Jesus then gave them the example of circumcising on the Sabbath. He said if they circumcised on the Sabbath and it was okay, why was it not okay to make a whole person well on the Sabbath. He told them not to judge according to appearance, but with righteous judgment.

(Jn 7:19-24) “Did not Moses give you the Law, and *yet* none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?” {20} The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?” {21} Jesus answered them, “I did one deed, and you all marvel. {22} “For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on *the* Sabbath you circumcise a man. {23} “If a man receives circumcision on *the* Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on *the* Sabbath? {24} “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

In verse twelve, we saw that this was a divided crowd. Some said that Jesus was a good man, and some said He was leading people astray. Now, some of the people were saying, “Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill? Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him.” They were wondering why Jesus had not been arrested. This part of the crowd did not believe Jesus, and they then said, “The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?” They speculated that if the religious leaders knew that Jesus was not the Christ, they would arrest Him. They said that they know where Jesus is from, and insinuated that the rulers did not know where Jesus was from. They showed their ignorance, saying that “whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.”

(Jn 7:25-31) “So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill? {26} “Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they? {27} “However, we know

where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from.”

The religious rulers did know where the Messiah was going to come from. They knew that He would be born in Bethlehem. When the magi came at the birth of Christ, they inquired where He was going to be born. Herod heard of it and was troubled, so he gathered together the chief priests and scribes and inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what has been written by the prophet, and they quoted Micah 5:2. Then Herod told the magi to report back to him after they found the Messiah. They found Jesus and worshiped Him, and then were warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod. When Herod saw that they did not return, He had all the male babies two and younger born in that area put to death. The point is that the rulers knew that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

(Mt 2:4–6) “Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. {5} They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: {6} ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

Jesus responded to the people, crying out in the temple, and said, “You both know Me and where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me.” This was not a soft rebuttal, but a loud and forceful one. The Greek word for cried out is *krazo* (Strong’s G2896), which means to croak or scream, or to shriek.

(Jn 7:28-29) “Then Jesus cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, “You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. {29} “I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me.”

To give you an idea of how that word is used, here are a few times it was used. When Jesus met the demoniac in the country of the Gadarenes, these violent demons cried out to Jesus, “What business do we have with each other?” This was a loud and violent scream by the demons.

(Mt 8:28–29) “When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. *They were* so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. {29} And they cried (*krazo*) out, saying, “What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

When Jesus was leaving Jerusalem, there were two blind men sitting by the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us.” They cried out loudly to get His attention. The crowd told them to be quiet, and they cried out all the more. Jesus stopped and asked them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” They told Him, “Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.” Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes and healed them. This was a loud, desperate cry.

(Mt 20:29–34) “As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him. {30} And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried (*krazo*) out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” {31} The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried (*krazo*) out all the more, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” {32} And Jesus

stopped and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?” {33} They said to Him, “Lord, *we want* our eyes to be opened.” {34} Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.”

When Herod was sitting on the judgment seat, considering what to do with Jesus, the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death. When Pilate asked the crowd what they wanted him to do, they said, “Crucify Him!” When Herod asked what evil he had done, they kept shouting all the more, shouting (krazo), ‘Crucify Him!’ Herod felt that a riot was forming and the crowd was getting out of control, and he yielded to their demand and sentenced Jesus to death. The shouting by the crowd was loud and forceful. When Jesus responded to the crowd about where He was from, He shouted out with a loud, forceful, authoritative voice, “You both know Me, and know where I am from...”

(Mt 27:20–24) “But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death. {21} But the governor said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” {22} Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said, “Crucify Him!” {23} And he said, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they kept shouting (krazo) all the more, saying, “Crucify Him!” {24} When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this Man’s blood; see *to that* yourselves.”

The response by some of the crowd to Jesus’ loud cry was to seek to seize Him. Why? “No man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.” Jesus stayed away from Judea because His time had not yet come. He didn’t go to Jerusalem with His brothers, but went privately. Jesus, aware of the timeline, did His part. The Father also did His part, and did not allow anyone to lay hands on Jesus, because His hour had not yet come.

(Jn 7:30) “So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.”

Not all the crowd wanted to seize Him; many of the crowd believed in Him. They said, “When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?” Everyone saw these signs, these attesting miracles, and yet some of them did not believe. The purpose of the signs was for people to believe, and some of the crowd saw the signs and believed. Some people will hear the gospel and believe and others will hear and not believe.

(Jn 7:31) “But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, “When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?”

The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Jesus, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. They did not want any of the crowd to believe and follow Him. The religious leaders wanted power and control, and they were fearful that they would lose their power. John tells us in John 11:47-48 that the chief priests and Pharisees acknowledged that Jesus was performing many signs, and their concern was that all men would believe in Him, and the Romans would take away both their place and their nation. They did not want to relinquish their power and control.

(Jn 7:32) “The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.”

(Jn 11:47–48) “Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, “What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. {48} “If we let Him *go on* like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

Jesus knew what the chief priests and Pharisees were doing. He knew that they sent officers to seize Him. He also knew that His time was not yet here, and He was walking in step with the Father, doing His will. Therefore, He said to them, “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.” He basically told them that He would be put to death and would be returning to the Father who had sent Him. He said that they would seek Him, but not find Him. The only way for them to go where He was going was to repent and believe in Him. If they did not eat the bread of life, they could not enter the kingdom of God, which is where Jesus was going to go.

(Jn 7:33-34) “Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. {34} “You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come.”

The Jews did not understand what Jesus had said. They asked one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? What is this statement, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?’” They were asking one another, and they should have been asking Jesus these questions.

(Jn 7:35-36) “The Jews then said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? {36} “What is this statement that He said, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?’”

2. Evidenced on the Last Day of the Feast (Jn 7:37-53)

Next, John goes to the last day of the feast, the great day of the feast. It was considered the great day of the feast for several reasons. First, it was the great day of the feast because it was the culmination of the feast and there was great rejoicing. On the first day of the feast, they would begin reading the Law, and they would finish it on the eighth day. On the last day, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” Jesus was telling them that those who believed in Him would receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had not been given to the church yet, because He was not yet glorified.

(Jn 7:37-39) “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. {38} “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’ ” {39} But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Another important thing had been added to the Feast of Booths was the daily drawing of water from the Pool of Siloam. One of the chief priests would lead a procession down through the Kidron Valley to the Pool of Siloam, and draw water from the pool into a golden vial. He would then carry it to the altar of the burnt sacrifice. As the priest walked through the gate of the

temple, the people would celebrate, rejoicing and praising God, and waving palm branches. Then the priest would mix the water with wine and pour it on the sacrifice on the altar. The people would sing, Isaiah 12:3, “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” This commemorated the water gushing out of the rock at Meribah, and quenched the thirst of the multitude in the desert.

So, Jesus’ invitation to people to come to Him and drink had another meaning as well. The Jews had received water from the rock at Meribah, and Jesus is telling them that He is the rock. If they drink of His water, which means to believe in Him, they would have a river of living water flowing in their innermost being. In 1 Corinthians 10:4, Paul wrote, “They all drank of the Spiritual Rock with followed them, and that Rock was Christ. Jesus is the Rock, and He was offering the crowds a drink of living water.

(1 Co 10:4) “and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.”

This invitation that Jesus cried out to the people was not a soft and gentle invitation. It is the second time that John uses the word, *krazo*, which is translated as crying out. It is a loud crying out, or a scream. It would have been heard by thousands of people there at the temple, not just the people in close proximity. Jesus wanted the gospel invitation to be heard by everyone, and He still wants it heard by everyone. That does not mean that we need to scream it to people. I shared the gospel with a young man last week, and it was done in a conversational manner. However, with hundreds of thousands of people there, and no sound amplification equipment, Jesus needed to cry out loudly so people could hear.

The response was by the people was divided. In verse forty-three, John recorded that a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. Some of the people that heard His words said, “This certainly is the Prophet.” In some cases, the “Prophet” refers to the Messiah. In John 6:14, after Jesus had fed the multitudes, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” Scholars believe that this was referring to the Messiah. In most cases, it refers to a prophet like Elijah or Jeremiah. It was a common belief that Elijah would come as a forerunner to the Messiah. Some believed that Jeremiah would also appear first, but that was not as common. We see a good example of this in John 1, when the religious leaders were questioning John the Baptist about who he was. They asked him if he was the Christ. Then they asked him if he was Elijah. Next, they asked him if he was the Prophet, meaning Jeremiah.

(Jn 7:40) “Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet.”

(Jn 1:19–21) “This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” {20} And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” {21} They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”

(Jn 6:14) “Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

In verse forty-one, others said, “This is the Christ.” Therefore, the Prophet is clearly differentiated from the Messiah. The prophet would therefore refer to Elijah, the forerunner, who was to prepare the way of the Lord. This group believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Another

group disagreed with them, saying that the Messiah was not going to come from Galilee. They knew that the Messiah would come from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, but what they did not know was that Jesus was a descendant of David, and He had been born in Bethlehem.

(Jn 7:41-43) “Others were saying, “This is the Christ.” Still others were saying, “Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? {42} “Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” {43} So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.”

There was still another group, and this group wanted to seize Jesus. This group probably included some of the chief priests, Pharisees, and others who had been influenced by them. They wanted to seize Him, and put Him to death. This was probably the same group that earlier had stated that He was leading people astray, and had wanted to seize Him, but no man laid his hand on Jesus because His hour had not yet come.

(Jn 7:44) “Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.”

(Jn 7:12) “There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, “He is a good man”; others were saying, “No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray.”

(Jn 7:30) “So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.”

John now addresses the Pharisees that were there. The Pharisees and chief priests had sent officers to seize Him. The officers have now returned, but without Jesus. The chief priests and Pharisees asked them, “Why did you not bring Him?” The officers responded, saying, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.” Earlier John wrote that people were amazed at Jesus’ teaching. It was not just the crowds that were amazed; the officers sent to arrest Him were also amazed. These officers knew the intentions of these religious leaders; it was to put Jesus to death, and after hearing Jesus speak, they couldn’t do what they were ordered to do.

(Jn 7:32-46) “The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.... {45} The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, “Why did you not bring Him?” {46} The officers answered, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.”

The Pharisees responded to the officers, saying, “You have not also been led astray, have you?” Then they turned their attention to the rulers and the rest of the Pharisees, asking, “No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?” They wanted to purge out any that may have been believing or interested in hearing more from Jesus. These religious leaders did not just use pressure on the crowds, threatening to put them out of the temple, but they used pressure and control tactics on their own ranks. Then they said, “But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed.” They were essentially saying that anyone that would follow Jesus did not know the Law and was accursed. Jesus had told them that they did not judge with righteous judgment, and had misinterpreted the Law. They are saying that Jesus is incorrect, and that their own interpretations of the Law are correct.

(Jn 7:47-49) “The Pharisees then answered them, “You have not also been led astray, have you? {48} “No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? {49} “But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed.”

In John 3, a ruler of the Pharisees, and a teacher of Israel, had come to Jesus by night to ask Him some questions. He said that no one can do the signs that Jesus was doing unless He has come from God. He wanted to know about entering the kingdom of God. Jesus told him that unless he is born again, he could not see the kingdom of God. This same Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus before, said to them, “Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?” Even though he came to Jesus at night, in secret, he is being bold and standing up for the rights of Jesus before these rulers. His response to these other rulers and Pharisees is likely going to get him removed from his position, and possibly put to death. It was a bold thing for Nicodemus to do.

(Jn 7:50-51) “Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them, {51} “Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?”

They answered Nicodemus, saying, “You are not also from Galilee, are you?” Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.” The people of Galilee were not well thought of, and the Pharisees knew good and well that Nicodemus was not from Galilee. They insulted and ridiculed Nicodemus. Their statement was not based on facts or logic; it was just an insult to make sure that none of their group were crossing the line and following Jesus.

In John 19:39, after Jesus had been put to death on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus got permission to bury Jesus, and they brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and took the body of Jesus and prepared it for burial, and buried him. Nicodemus became a believer and follower of Christ. Church tradition is that he was excommunicated from the Sanhedrin Council and banished from Jerusalem. His family was reduced to utter poverty. Finally, he was martyred, beaten to death by a mob. On August 3, the Eastern Church celebrates the life and sainthood of Nicodemus.

(Jn 19:38–40) “After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body. {39} Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. {40} So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.”

We do not have Scriptural verification of what happened to Nicodemus, just church traditions that have been handed down for a couple thousand years. However, we have a historical document called the Acts of Pilate, also known as the Gospel of Nicodemus. In Part 1, Chapter 5, there is an account of Nicodemus defending Christ before Pilate. Here is the text of that account.

And one of the Jews stepped out and said, “I know the family of Jesus, excellent and wise in the law, and I know Joseph his reputed father and Mary his mother. Jesus is called the son of David, and he was born of Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. And many of you know this.”

The Jews said to Pilate, “Send for witnesses who will speak about these things.”

And Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, stood up and said, "I entreat you, Pilate, allow me to speak a few words." Pilate said to him, "Speak on."

Nicodemus said, "I spoke to the elders, priests, and Levites, and to the whole council of the Jews, saying: 'Why do you desire to crucify this man, who performs many miracles, such as no one else has done? He heals the sick, cleanses lepers, raises the dead. Why do you seek to kill him?'"

The Jews answered Nicodemus, "You are his disciple and a supporter of his cause."

Nicodemus replied, "Is the governor also his disciple because he does not order his crucifixion?"

And Pilate said to the Jews, "Your accusation is unfounded."

In Chapter 7 of the Acts of Pilate, Nicodemus is mentioned again. This is cross-referenced by John 7:51.

Then the Jews said to Nicodemus, "You are a friend of his, and his words have made you his disciple."

Nicodemus said, "Does a ruler judge a man before he hears him?" (cf. John 7:51)

They responded, "May you receive his truth and share his fate."

Then, in Chapter 13, after the crucifixion of Jesus, there is a conversation between Nicodemus and the Jews.

And Nicodemus stood before the multitude of Jews and said, "You cursed ones! What have you done? You have crucified the Just One, and now you see signs and wonders attending his death."

The Jews said to him, "May you be cursed for speaking in his favor."

While the Acts of Pilate are not part of the canon of Scripture, they are nonetheless a historical document. Most scholars date the text early to mid-4th century.

Then, everyone went to his own home. The Feast of Booths was over, and the crowds were leaving. The chief priests, rulers, and Pharisees had not accomplished what they had set out to do, and they all went home. It was not yet Jesus' time, so no one laid hands on Jesus at the Feast.

(Jn 7:52-53) "They answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee." {53} Everyone went to his home."

Conclusion and Applications

At the Feast of Booths there was great discussion between the crowds about who Jesus was. Some said He was the Prophet, and others said He was the Messiah. Others claimed that He was leading people astray. Jesus told the crowds that they knew who He was and where He was from.

When Jesus was with His disciples, He asked them, “Who do people say that I am?” Similar to our text in John, some people believed Jesus was Elijah or one of the prophets. Some thought He was John the Baptist. Then, Jesus asked the disciples, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.” It is an important question, one of the most important questions in life. Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came in the flesh and died for the sins of the world?

(Mk 8:27–29) “Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people say that I am?” {28} They told Him, saying, “John the Baptist; and others *say* Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.” {29} And He *continued* by questioning them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.”

At the feast, Jesus stood up and shouted out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”

(Jn 7:37–38) “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. {38} “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”

At the end of Revelations, the Spirit and the bride (the church) say, “Come. Come. And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes to take the water of life without cost.” Jesus is still crying out to everyone, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.” This is an invitation to put your trust in Jesus and receive Him into your life. If you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and would like to receive Christ, simply tell Him that. Tell Him that you believe He is the Messiah, and that He died for your sins, and you would like to receive Him into your life and make Him Lord. He promises to come in, and to fill you with His Spirit. When you do that, in your innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

(Re 22:17) “The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”

Nicodemus was a secret disciple. He came to Jesus at night and asked His questions. At the Feast of Booths, he stood up for Jesus. Later, he and Joseph of Arimathea, another disciple of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for His body. They took and buried Jesus in a tomb, with a hundred pounds of expensive burial spices. The Feast of Booths was the day that Nicodemus took a stand for Christ. Perhaps you have been a secret disciple of Jesus. Perhaps this is the day for you to take a stand for Christ. Today is the day for you to begin telling others that you are a Christian. Today is a day for you to become a bold witness for Christ.

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for this account of the Feast of Booths. Jesus, thank You for promising a river of living water to those who drink of You. Lord, I pray that we will take a stand like Nicodemus and begin to tell others about You. We pray for boldness in sharing with others. We pray for divine opportunities to be Your witnesses. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- John wrote that Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple of Jesus. He and Nicodemus stepped out and became public witnesses for Christ. Why do you think they were secret disciples up to this point? What caused them to become open about their faith?
- Do you feel that there are many secret disciples of Jesus in America? What will it take for people to begin taking a stand for Christ?
- What does it mean to have rivers of living water flowing in your innermost being? Can you give a personal example of refreshing from that living water?
- There is a timeline for all of our lives. God knows the days ordained for us when there was not yet one of them. (Ps 139:16) How should knowing this affect the way that we live our lives?
- The officers were sent to arrest Jesus, but they did not arrest Him. They said, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.” What things did Jesus speak, or in what ways did He speak that made them say this, and not to arrest Jesus?

Introduction (Ga 4:4, Ac 2:23, Jn 1:29, Mt 3:17, Lk 9:30-31, Jn 7:32-53)

- ## Conclusion and Applications (Mk 8:27–29, Jn 7:37–38, Re 22:17)